

Sustaining the Quality of the All-Volunteer Force: A Cost-Effective
Approach

A Monograph

by

MAJ Colby K. Krug
US Army



School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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Name of Candidate: MAJ Colby K. Krug

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Approved by:

_____, Monograph Director
Barry M. Stentiford, PhD

_____, Seminar Leader
Randall S. Hoffman, LtCol

_____, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
Henry A. Arnold III, COL, IN

Accepted this 26th day of May 2016 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, PhD

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Abstract

Sustaining the Quality of the All-Volunteer Force: A Cost-Effective Approach, by MAJ Colby K. Krug, US Army, 59 pages.

Since the inception of the All-Volunteer Force, following a President's Commission in February of 1970, the United States military has demonstrated that it can fight wars without implementing a draft, creating a strong paradigm among both policymakers and the populace. Fighting wars without a draft was not the recommendation of the commission, instead the commission intended that the All-Volunteer Force provide peacetime manpower, while Selective Service would support the mobilization for war. Political realities essentially preclude the draft, consequently resulting in detrimental effects, both fiscally and morally, to the US Army. For example, to prevent fracturing the All-Volunteer Force while fighting two protracted wars simultaneously, Army leadership lowered standards from FY 2005-2008, while swelling pay and benefit packages. As a result, first term attrition appreciated by 3.4 percent, costing the Army at least 13.7 billion dollars over six years. This monograph discovers that the US Army possesses the tools to avoid similar unintended consequences in the future, at a reasonable cost, while supporting the current strategy and preserving the All-Volunteer Force.

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Acronyms

AOC	Army Operating Concept
ASVAB	Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery
AVF	All-Volunteer Force (refers to active Army component)
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CONUS	Continental United States
CSA	Chief of Staff of the Army
DA	Department of the Army
DoD	Department of Defense
FORSCOM	US Army Forces Command
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
JROTC	Junior Reserved Officer Training Corps
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
RAF	Regionally Aligned Forces
SECDEF	Secretary of Defense
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
TSC	Test Score Category
USAREC	US Army Recruiting Command

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Introduction

"The strength of the wolf is in the pack, and the strength of the pack is in the wolf"

— Rudyard Kipling

In 2001, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen said, "We have the finest military on Earth because we have the finest people on Earth, because we recruit and we retain the best that America has to offer."¹ The United States Army failed to uphold that statement nearly four years later. To supply the recruiting demand required in the Middle East, the Army opted to lower entrance standards while swelling pay and benefit packages. Unfortunately, there were few other options at the time, as the Army's leadership, under strategic guidance from President George W. Bush, sought to preserve the All-Volunteer Army without breaking it. Ten years later the institution is still recovering from the costs associated with the decision, and looking for ways to prevent making the same choice in the future since the draft is no longer a feasible option, shy of a World War III-type scenario. A potentially similar decision point is not acceptable if recruitment efforts are to remain cost effective and aligned with the latest strategy focusing on the human dimension of war. However, the US Army indeed possesses the tools to prevent such a decision in the future, at a reasonable cost, while preserving the All-Volunteer Force (AVF). The tools required, elucidated by careful study, can be found in the past experiences of the AVF. These tools are preferable to a repeat of shortsighted, and costly to implement, solutions.

After more than twenty years and three major conflicts requiring the use of conventional forces and a substantial amount of lessons learned, the US Army is transitioning to a new Army Operating Concept (AOC). The AOC serves as the starting point for developing the future force.² The last AOC, in place since the 1980s, was AirLand Battle when the Army was

¹ William S. Cohen, "Farewell To US Armed Forces," Speech, Fort Meyer, VA, January 18, 2001.

² Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1.

preparing to fight the Soviet Union. The concept, under the guiding principle of “fight outnumbered and win” focused on a massive, tank-on-tank battle in the plains of Central Europe. The concept defined the environment, the enemy, and the coalition.³ The latest concept, under the guiding principle of “win in a complex world,” focuses on the Army of the next twenty years, fighting in an environment that is not only unknown, but also unknowable and constantly changing. The Army will not be able to predict whom it will fight, where it will fight, and with what coalition it will fight.⁴ Therefore, the Army must recruit the best and brightest America has to offer, as Secretary of Defense Cohen said, to ensure its ability to accomplish these unpredictable mission sets.⁵

The latest AOC assumes the US Army will remain a professional, AVF, relying on all components of the Army to meet future commitments.⁶ The future commitments envision an Army that is “regionally engaged and globally responsive” using the concept of Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF). The RAF concept assigns or allocates forces to various combatant commands to establish relations and build trust with other Armies while developing resident knowledge about a certain area of the world. Accomplishing such regional missions requires an understanding of the cultures, geography, languages, and militaries of the countries where RAF are most likely to be employed, as well as expertise in

³ Michelle Tan, “Army Unveils New Plan To ‘Win In A Complex World’,” *Army Times*, last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://archive.armytimes.com/article/20141013/NEWS/310130024/>.

⁴ Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), iv.

⁵ William S. Cohen, “Farewell To US Armed Forces,” 2001.

⁶ Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 8.

how to impart military knowledge and skills to others.⁷ To “win in a complex world” the Training and Doctrine (TRADOC) Commander, General David Perkins, stated, “Our soldiers just have to be better than their soldiers, their cognitive capability just has to be better.”⁸ The previous operating concept did not use this type of language and focused more on superior technology to “fight out-numbered and win.” Looking into the future, the Army, is not dismissing the idea of superior technology, but is emphasizing the importance of the human dimension and reasons why human quality matters more in today’s operational environment. In an effort to support the latest strategy, while remaining an exemplary AVF for other partner and ally countries to emulate, the US Army must meet qualitative objectives. Correspondingly, the Army must be prepared for quantitative requisites to shift based on the political landscape.

The policy adopted to reach quantitative goals from 2005 to 2008, under less than optimal recruiting conditions, was to pay higher premiums via bonuses, pay, and college benefits while lowering entrance standards. Because of this costly policy decision, it is both necessary and relevant to look at ways the US Army can avoid this endeavor in the future. In 2014, the US Army Recruiting Commander, Major General Allen W. Batschelet, admitted this error writing, “We bought service and failed to engender commitment. We learned this was a failed approach we cannot afford to repeat.”⁹ First, this paper will explain what lowering standards to meet recruitment numbers costs both fiscally and morally. Second, discuss how the current quantity of potential quality recruits is trending in a negative direction. Finally, this paper will propose a plan

⁷ Kimberly Field, James Learmont and Jason Charland, “Regionally Aligned Forces: Business Not As Usual,” *Strategic Studies Institute*, last modified 2013, accessed December 15, 2015, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/issues/Autumn_2013/5_Field.pdf.

⁸ Michelle Tan, “Army Unveils New Plan To ‘Win In A Complex World’,” *Army Times*, last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://archive.armytimes.com/article/20141013/NEWS/310130024/>.

⁹ MG Allen Batschelet, “Acquiring Talent for Force 2025, US Army Recruiting Command,” 2014.

to counter the variables presented in the current environment. It is a plan that sustains the quality of the AVF for the long term at an acceptable fiscal cost because a draft is no longer a feasible solution to US policymakers.¹⁰

This monograph contains five sections. Section one consists of the methodology and literature review. The methodology explains the approach and theoretical lenses used to test the hypothesis. The literature review studies the reasons why quality in an AVF construct has increased or decreased in the past. Section two demonstrates why the US Army has an AVF versus a conscript force today and why the American people will not support a draft today short of a WWII scenario. Section three clarifies the major concerns facing the Army's top recruiting leadership today. Section four explains the cost the US Army incurs by choosing to lower enlistment standards. It also compares the US Army's recruiting data from 1993, when quality recruitment objectives were not perfect, but were met, and 2006's, when quality standards were lowered to meet quantitative goals. This analysis generates a total fiscal cost in terms of first-term attrition and non-deployable personnel. The final section introduces the Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program, as a cost-effective tool the institution already possesses for sustaining the quality of the AVF for the long term.

Methodology

The scope of this research covers the period from President Richard Nixon's pledge to end the draft, until the present day. Analysis combined descriptive, causal, and correlational research methods. Quality and quantity are the two key variables for sustaining the AVF for the long-term. The controlled variable for this study is quality and what defines a quality enlisted soldier. The US Army considers a recruit "high quality" if they possess a high school diploma and score in the top half of the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AQFT). The AQFT is a subset of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test consisting of four subtests:

¹⁰ Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006), 756. Last vote for a draft reinstatement in Congress was in 2003 and unanimously voted 402-2 against it on October 6, 2004.

Word Knowledge, Arithmetic Reasoning, Paragraph Comprehension, and Mathematics Knowledge. Each recruit must take the ASVAB prior to admission into the Army. The four subtests that make up the AQFT score an individual on a scale of 0-99. The scores indicate a recruit's trainability. Recruits with scores in Test Score Categories (TSC) I (AFQT percentiles 93-99) and II (65-92) are considered above average. Those with scores in TSCs IIIA (50-64) and IIIB (31-49) are considered of average trainability, whereas, those with scores in Category IV (10-30) are considered below average. The personnel who score in Category V (0-9) are considered markedly below average and are typically refused enlistment.¹¹ The only statute placed on the DoD by Congress is that no less than sixty-five percent of recruits can be high school graduates and no more than twenty percent of recruits can be from TSC IV. The Army, on the other hand, sets their recruitment objectives much higher. The Army aims to recruit ninety percent of individuals who possess a high school diploma, no more than four percent from TSC IV, and no less than sixty-five percent who score in the TSC IIIA or above. This rationale is due to evidence proving these individuals are more likely to complete their enlistment terms, and possess the potential for worthy performance.¹²

A number of studies have confirmed that "high quality" recruits were promoted faster and yield better results in training for war. A study conducted by the Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis at West Point determined that an AFQT TSC I tank commander received 75.2 percent more "kills" than his TSC IV counterpart on the same system. In addition, an 11B infantryman, with a high school diploma and an AQFT score above TSC IIIA was promoted 13.7 percent faster than a TSC IIIB.¹³ In essence, the standards set to determine quality make

¹¹ "Military Recruitment 2010," *National Priorities Project*, last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/analysis/2011/military-recruitment-2010>.

¹² "Frequently Asked Questions about Recruiting," *Usarec.army.mil*, last modified 2015, accessed December 15, 2015, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/support/faqs.htm>.

¹³ Curtis L. Gilroy, *Army Manpower Economics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), ix-x.

professional sense, and the US Army must give their best effort to uphold them in all circumstances shy of a WWII scenario.

Carl von Clausewitz's theory of war, Thomas S. Kuhn's paradigm model, Everett Dolman's theory of strategy, and Peter L. Berger's theory of socially constructed reality present worthwhile theoretical lenses through which to look at maintaining the quality of the AVF. Carl von Clausewitz's theory of war suggests "War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."¹⁴ The primary source of means used, on land, since 1973 in the United States has been the All-Volunteer Army with the policymakers dictating both size and employment criteria. As a backstop, the Selective Service System exists to augment the All-Volunteer Army in the case of war. However, since the Vietnam War, the US Army has arguably been in three major state conflicts, but the Selective Service System never brought any of the manpower used for these conflicts into the force. The Selective Service System not once being invoked during these major conflicts segues to Kuhn's paradigm model. Kuhn posits that, through historiographical study of the physical science discipline, the process from one theory to another is not a linear progression, but occurs in a causal manner over time.¹⁵ Over the past forty-two years, policymakers have developed a theory that limited ground wars can be fought without a draft creating a new, very strong, paradigm that denounces any thought of conscription. Today, the paradigm is that the AVF will serve as a deterrence while fighting all of our nation's wars short of a World War III scenario. The leadership of the US Army cannot change this paradigm so it must embrace and expand the paradigm with a strategy to support the Army's new operating concept. Dolman wrote, "strategy,

¹⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, Michael Howard, and Peter Paret, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87.

¹⁵ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1996), 1-9.

in its simplest form, is a plan for attaining a continuing advantage.”¹⁶ The question therefore, is: “How does the US Army put itself in a position of relative advantage, when it is required to grow the force, without sacrificing quality or instituting a draft?” The answer relies upon whether the Army can socially construct the reality through secondary socialization of potential recruits prior to enlistment age as posited by Berger.¹⁷ This monograph will use concepts from these four theorists in order to provide a framework for analysis.

Literature Review

Over the last forty-two years, much of the literature on the quality of the All-Volunteer Force focused on the theoretical causes of why quality rises and falls within the Army during specific periods. Much of the literature available addresses the roles of social reform, cost, standardized testing, economics, advertising, deployments, and protracted, limited war while also introducing new paradigms to implement. The idea of recruiting quality young men and women versus those who see the Army as an employer of last resort is not a new concept. Yet, the AVF has proven it cannot meet qualitative goals under all circumstances. The factors outlined above that have an impact upon recruiting will be discussed chronologically in turn.

Social Reform – Can the Military Fix Quality?

In September of 1963, President John F. Kennedy established the Task Force on Manpower Conservation because, in the previous year, one-third of all eighteen-year old men reporting for draft examinations tested unfit for service. Over half were ineligible due to the lack of aptitude.¹⁸ Although commitments to Vietnam tripled troop levels in both 1961 and 1962,

¹⁶ Everett C. Dolman, *Pure Strategy* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 6.

¹⁷ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction Of Reality* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), 130.

¹⁸ Janice H. Laurence and Peter F. Ramsberger, *Low-Aptitude Men In The Military* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 15.

President Kennedy claimed the military could serve as a venue where young people could develop skills and work experience. He worried that military rejects would include tomorrow's hard-core unemployed; hurting his domestic policy.¹⁹ Beginning in 1966, under President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" and escalating manpower requirements in Vietnam, some 300,000 low-aptitude men enlisted or were drafted into the military as part of a program called Project 100,000.²⁰ Project 100,000 tested whether the military could take men of low aptitude and yield employed, capable soldiers.

Since then many scholars have studied whether this program was a positive or negative boost in terms of quality gained for both the military and the men involved. Janice H. Laurence and Peter F. Ramsberger provide empirical evidence that Project 100,000 did not work the way President Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert H. McNamara intended. Twenty years later, non-veterans, of the same aptitude, outpaced veterans in employment, wages, and education, while family life did not differ substantially.²¹ The veterans who were supposed to benefit from military experience actually ended up worse off than their civilian counter-parts that did not serve. Kelly M. Greenhill, an assistant professor of government at Wesleyan University and a research fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government summed it up well in a *New York Times* article stating, "Project 100,000 was a failed experiment. It proved to be a distraction for the military and of little benefit to the men it was created to help."²² Project 100,000 indicated

¹⁹ John F. Kennedy, "Statement by the President Establishing the Task Force on Manpower Conservation," 30 September 1963.

²⁰ Janice H. Laurence and Peter F. Ramsberger, *Low-Aptitude Men In The Military* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 1.

²¹ *Ibid*, 119-125.

²² Kelly Greenhill, "Don't Dumb Down The Army - Harvard - Belfer Center For Science And International Affairs," *Belfercenter.Ksg.Harvard.Edu*, last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/1519/dont_dumb_down_the_army.html.

that the military is not a tool to fix social ills and diverts attention from the primary mission of defending the United States.

Quality - All-Volunteer Force versus Conscription

No shortages of opinions exist as to the pros and cons of the AVF versus conscription. Historians argue that conscription generally ensured enlistment from a broad cross-section of American youth, including a proportionate number of high school graduates with generally high aptitudes.²³ The historian's placement and schema is driven by US wars fought prior to Vietnam when conscription equaled normalcy. Robert K. Griffith Jr, a former Army officer and military historian, argued that "fair" draft induced enlistments produced higher quality because it took factors such as the economy and propensity to serve out of the question. On the other hand, BG (Ret) Paul D. Phillips, a former defense manpower analyst and deputy assistant to the Secretary of the Army in 1974, said that the lack of quality received from draft calls during the Vietnam era was the most critical factor for transition to the AVF construct.²⁴ As ever, political masters in Congress will have to manage political risk while balancing the wishes of their constituents and the capabilities requested of the DoD. Congress defines political risk in the defense arena as cost.

Aside from the US politics vis-a-vis Vietnam in the early 1970s, the Army wanted to prove that transitioning to an AVF was in the best interest of Congress, the military, and taxpayers alike. To defend the argument for transition, the Army provided the attrition rates of what they considered quality and substandard quality recruits. For example, males with no high-school diploma (General Education Diplomas do not count as a high school diploma) and listed as a TSC IIIB after taking the AQFT did not fulfill their initial obligation forty-two percent of the

²³ Barbara A. Bicksler et al., *The All-Volunteer Force* (Washington, DC: Brassey's Inc., 2004), 91.

²⁴ Robert K. Griffith, *The US Army's Transition To The All-Volunteer Force, 1968-1974* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1996), 286.

time; twenty percent higher than a high school graduate from TSC I-III A.²⁵ The Army's leadership concluded that accepting low mental category and high school dropout rates over an extended period simply made them more costly. On the other hand, higher quality recruits, despite the bonus and other "up front" costs needed to attract better candidates, were cheaper in the long term.²⁶ However, with the policymakers more concerned with cost and quantity than with quality, the Army's high school diploma graduate (HSDG) ratio dropped from 70:30 to 50:50.²⁷ Due to this decision, the Army struggled to attract and retain quality soldiers within the force until the mid-1980s. Under an AVF construct, the consequences of a short-term policy decisions such as this, fiscally and qualitatively, can take years to recover from. Ergo, a long-term, holistic, and strategic outlook is far more desirable and cost efficient.

Quality Screening – Standardized Testing

From 1976 – 1980 the importance of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (ASVAB) as a means of standardized testing in recruiting quality soldiers was highlighted. The ASVAB is a standardized test given to all potential enlistees consisting of ten subtests. The Army uses the scores on these subtests in two ways: to measure general military trainability (the AFQT portion of the test) and to assess vocational aptitude for a specific Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).²⁸ In principle, the higher the ASVAB score the more jobs within the Army become available to the recruit seeking enlistment.

In January 1976, the ASVAB became the common measure used across all services to screen enlistment applicants for aptitude. However, the score scales were defective,

²⁵ Ibid, 287.

²⁶ Ibid, 286.

²⁷ Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006), 271.

²⁸ Department of Defense, *Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Test Manual*, (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), 104-07.

unintentionally allowing large numbers of previously unqualified applicants to enter the military. This episode has come to be known as “ASVAB misnorming” because a process known as test-norming determines score scales.²⁹ As a result, DoD accepted 423,590 Category IV recruits across the military between January 1, 1976, and September 30, 1980, with the Army receiving the majority of the recruits.³⁰ These recruits’ scores were showing them as Category IIIB and above, allowing approximately forty-one thousand soldiers (accounting for approximately twenty-five percent of recruits) per year into the Army and admitting them into technical MOSs. In perspective, today the Army does not allow more than four percent of these recruits into the force. During this same period, commanders in the field were complaining about receiving lower quality enlisted personnel. Janice H. Laurence and Peter F. Ramsberger conducted a random survey in 1986 of a portion of the misnorming era soldiers mistakenly allowed into the force. They discovered that seventy-two percent were administratively separated prior to their three-year standard term of enlistment.³¹ Looking forward, policymakers, defense manpower managers, and Army leadership must understand that lower quality recruits historically fail to fulfill their initial obligation when compared to recruits who meet qualitative standards.

Economics - Unemployment and Pay

Authors Rostker, Bailey, and Gilroy have studied the close relationship between unemployment and Army enlistment rates. All have come to the same conclusion: as the economy improves and unemployment falls, the level of quality recruits decreases. In 1984, the quality requirements set by Army manpower managers dropped by 25 percent due to a strong

²⁹ Joshua D. Angrist, “Estimating The Labor Market Impact Of Voluntary Military Service Using Social Security Data On Military Applicants,” *Econometrica* 66, no. 2 (1998): 251.

³⁰ Laurence and Ramsberger, *Low-Aptitude Men In The Military*, 63-65.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 123-125.

economy.³² As the Gates Commission concluded in 1970, to sustain an AVF, pay must be commensurate with the civilian workforce. Throughout the years, many military proponents would argue that it is still relevant today: when military pay falls compared to civilian pay, recruiting goals become tougher to achieve. All studies then conclude that recruiting goals can still be met with increased advertising, more recruiters, pay raises, enlistment bonuses and benefits making the military more competitive with the attractions of the civilian world.³³ In theory, if the military can maintain a comparable level of pay and benefits to civilian employers, and adequate recruiting resources are available, the Army can reach recruiting goals in an increasingly tight labor market.³⁴ Ergo, given the stagnant defense budget coupled with the low unemployment rate and increase in minimum wages increase as seen in 2015, the US Army will require more than just money and benefits in order to shape the recruiting environment of the future.

Recruitment Resources – Advertising and Recruiters

Previous authors indicated there were many aspects of the market that the military cannot control, including unemployment, general economic conditions, and competition with universities.³⁵ However, the US Army Recruiting Command attempts to understand these trends and influence the propensity of quality individuals through advertising and recruiting.

A Congressional Budget Office study, conducted in 2010, provides evidence that if the Army increased the field of recruiters by ten percent then enlistments increase by four to six

³² Curtis L. Gilroy, *Army Manpower Economics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), 149.

³³ Beth L. Bailey, *America's Army* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 22.

³⁴ Gilroy, *Army Manpower Economics*, 158.

³⁵ Barbara A. Bicksler et al., *The All-Volunteer Force* (Washington, DC: Brassey's Inc., 2004), 144.

percent. The same study also found that an increase of ten percent in the advertising budget results in a one percent increase in enlistments.³⁶ In short, there is a correlation between advertising expenditures and enlistment; although, the positive correlation does not guarantee the prospective enlistee is of the requisite standard. In 2005, at the height of wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan coupled with decreasing popular support, recruiting costs were estimated at between 21,000 and 30,000 dollars, per recruit, not including an enlistment bonus.³⁷ This evidence suggests the Army requires a more efficient and cost-effective plan for sustaining the AVF for the long-term. Otherwise, advertising, bonuses, and recruiters alone will absorb a major portion of the personnel budget.

1990s Operational Deployments

After the Vietnam War, minor conflicts tested the durability of the AVF. The results demonstrated that the new force could meet the demands of limited conventional war. Furthermore, the force dealt with increasingly complex military technology while fulfilling the nation's security responsibilities. The trends also suggested that conflicts appeared to be diminishing in size and scope.³⁸ However, after the 1991 Persian Gulf War and throughout the 1990s, ever-increasing deployments placed demands on soldiers and their families that largely did not exist during the Cold-War era. A RAND Corporation study, conducted in 1997, concluded that while the Army was down three percent in personnel, deployed operations were up 300 percent between 1993 and 1996. This equated to four divisions committed around the globe at

³⁶ Emmanuel D. Chapman, *Recruiting, Retention, And Future Levels Of Military Personnel* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2010), 9.

³⁷ Emmanuel D. Chapman, *Recruiting, Retention, And Future Levels Of Military Personnel* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2010), 39.

³⁸ Robert K Griffith, *The US Army's Transition To The All-Volunteer Force, 1968-1974* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1996), 293.

any one time. Officers and senior Non-Commissioned Officers were spending 180-190 days away from home annually with Junior Soldiers spending approximately 140-150 days away. Soldiers left the military due to strain on their families and marriage.³⁹

For example, among the 1,305 soldiers with families surveyed, 61.7 percent cited the number of deployments as the reason for leaving.⁴⁰ With the veteran population slowly decreasing over time and evidence indicating that military service is a family legacy, a social and recruiting component is lost when disaffected soldiers leave.⁴¹ From the policymaker's perspective, the perceived success of the 1990s operational deployments demonstrated the AVF is not a fragile institution. Yet, actual recruitment data demonstrates there is no doubt that overemployment can break the will of the service members needed to complete the mission. This situation proves that the size of the force when matched to mission sets must be closely monitored and adjusted appropriately, recognizing that current soldiers affect the ideology of future soldiers. In other words, as read previously, there are more downstream costs to shortsighted decisions when choosing where, when, and how often to employ the AVF.

21st Century Protracted Limited Wars

Few scholars have done in depth analysis since 2005, as much of the empirical data required is still not public. However, in 2004 General Peter J. Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army at the time, directed the Army Staff to anticipate that OIF3 and OIF4 would be as large as OIF2 and saw no reason to expect a reduction in manning levels soon thereafter.⁴² The evidence

³⁹ Bernard Rostker, *America Goes To War* (Santa Monica: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2007), 74-75.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 74-75.

⁴¹ Andrea Boyer and Edward Schmitz, *Socio-Demographics and Military Recruiting: The Role Of Veterans* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 1999).

⁴² John S. Brown, *Kevlar Legions: The Transformation of the United States Army 1989-2005* (Fort Leavenworth: US Army Center of Military History, 2012), 256.

is clear that the Army was not ready for this message from a recruiting standpoint. Shortly after this announcement, there was a vote in the House of Representative to reinstate the draft. The legislation, introduced in 2003 by Representative Charles Rangel (D-NY), a combat veteran, and brought to the floor by Republicans, intended to quash rumors of a draft reinstatement prior to the 2004 presidential election. The vote was 402 to two rejecting a return to conscription.⁴³ Therefore, the Gates Commission's original plan that the All-Volunteer Force provides peacetime manpower, while Selective Service would support mobilization for war had become politically untenable.⁴⁴

The decision not to establish a draft forced Army leadership to consider alternatives to manpower pressures and alleviate the burden of the deployment cycle. Army leaders decided, with Congressional and DoD approval, that they need to grow the force, operationalize the Reserve and Army National Guard, and become a more flexible organization. To become more flexible the Army stripped division headquarters of their newly modular brigades to allow for a proper boots on ground to dwell time ratio. Boots on ground is considered the time a soldier spends deployed, while dwell time is the time spent at home station or in a training environment. Simultaneously, the Army operationalized the Army National Guard and Reserve forces so their brigades could replace a Regular Army Brigade one for one. Lastly, the leadership knew they needed to grow the Army. However, the recruiting efforts under the “grow the Army initiative” in 2005 not only missed their quantitative objectives, but also proved incapable of sustaining the quality of the All-Volunteer Force. Now that the AVF fought two wars concurrently without instituting a draft, the Army should assume that this same problem set will be encountered again in the future.

⁴³ Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006), 756.

⁴⁴ Beth L. Bailey, *America's Army* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 227.

Potential Alternatives

On July 1, 1973, the paradigm of the military shifted from one where Americans were conscripted at the rate required by policy to one where everyone eligible had an option to volunteer or not.⁴⁵ Four potential alternatives to the AVF have been identified in previous literature. First is national service, a proposal that all citizens between the ages of eighteen and twenty give two years of service to the government. Colonel William Raymond, former head of academics for the US Army's Command and General Staff College, proposed a concept for universal national service that would assist the military alleviate a portion of the recruiting burden. In 2005, he argued that the United States could successfully implement a plan of national service with four options. Young adults would be required to serve in the military, AmeriCorps, the Department of Homeland Security, or the Peace Corps.⁴⁶ However, this concept only indirectly addresses manning the military and violates the 13th Amendment to the Constitution due to being a form of involuntary servitude. The second is the concept of universal military training requiring all citizens between the ages of 18 and 20 to attend basic military training with no obligation for further service unless called upon to activate. The third is a lottery draft system, as employed in the Vietnam era, that would require all men and women (who in 2015 can serve in combat roles) to register for military service. If drafted, legal residents, permanent aliens, and those seeking citizenship would serve a length of time determined by the national policy at the time. The fourth, introduced by Major General (Ret.) Dennis Laich to cut costs, reduces the active army by almost half while implementing a lottery-based draft upon all citizens, both men and women. If drafted, the individual would have three options: serve six years in the Reserve or National Guard, serve two years on active duty, or enroll in a ROTC program and attend college

⁴⁵ Dennis Laich, *Skin In The Game* (Bloomington: iUniverse LLC, 2013), 142.

⁴⁶ William M. Raymond, *Uncle Sam Says, "I Want You!"* (Fort Leavenworth: School of Advanced Military Studies, 2005), 48.

to commission as an officer.⁴⁷ The issue with these potential alternatives is that they all require a crisis to act as a catalyst to break the paradigm, and envision a scenario that today's AVF could not handle.

How does the Army maintain the quality of personnel recruited, when size must increase or decrease when it does not control all of the variables?

AVF Quality = f (Budget, Deployments, Unemployment, College Benefits, Recruiters, Advertising, Domestic politics)

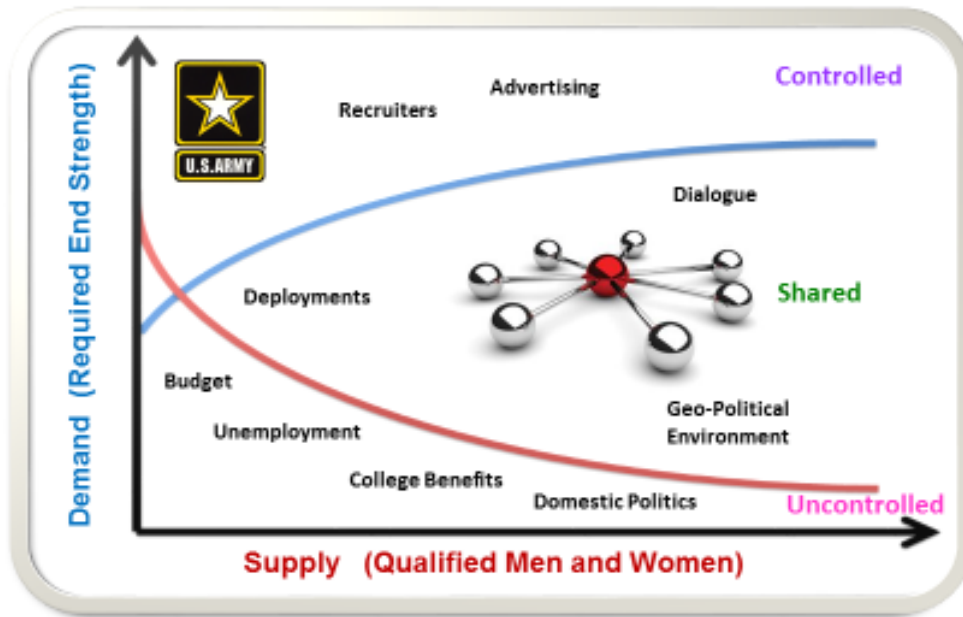


Figure 1. The Recruitment Math Equation

Source: Created by author.

Previous literature suggests that sustaining the quality of the AVF Army is best described as a math equation (See Figure 1) with a multitude of variables ranging from economic factors and allocated budgets to the geopolitical situation; all of which affect the overall recruitment outcome. Other lessons learned include the idea that the military cannot always repair an individual's shortcomings. Yet lowering standards to create an appearance of success from a

⁴⁷ Dennis Laich, *Skin In The Game* (Bloomington: iUniverse LLC, 2013), 142.

numbers perspective has persistent consequences. As of 2015, US policy remains with the AVF model requiring the active component of the Army to expand and contract based on the strategic context and political environment. If the US Army is expecting high quality recruits for its long-term strategy, leadership must have a plan to counter the variables they cannot control while sustaining the quality; heeding the above math equation.

Conception of the All-Volunteer Force

In October 1968, Republican candidate Richard Nixon saw a political opportunity while campaigning for the Presidency and announced if elected he would move the country's military towards an AVF. Nixon proclaimed, "that a draft that arbitrarily selects some and not others simply cannot be squared with our whole concept of liberty, justice, and equality under the law... in the long run, the only way to stop the inequities is to stop using the system."⁴⁸ In the years leading up to the Vietnam War, with the male population growing and draft inducements sharply dropping Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara examined the idea of an All-Volunteer Force. In 1964, only eleven percent of the service consisted of draftees. However, the study determined that getting the draftee number to zero would require a combination of lower standards, civilianization of many military positions, and increased incentives. The DoD decided this endeavor was too costly and restricted their ability to quickly expand the force in an emergency.⁴⁹ One year later, President Lyndon B. Johnson committed combat forces to Vietnam using the Selective Service System versus calling on the reserve components. The theory of the All-Volunteer Force would sit on the back burner a bit longer. However, a few years later, the passion

⁴⁸ Richard M. Nixon, *The All-Volunteer Armed Force: A Radio Address by the Republican Presidential Nominee* (Washington, DC: Republican National Committee, 1968).

⁴⁹ Robert K. Griffith, *The US Army's Transition To The All-Volunteer Force, 1968-1974* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1996), 10.

of US citizens combined with the image of the Vietnam War created the energy required for a crisis pushing policymakers to break the conscription paradigm.

During Nixon's campaign, the Army started to re-examine the AVF policy based on political climate, strategic needs, and organizational calamities. Besides the Presidential candidate's claim and waning popular support, the institution increasingly struggled with poor morale, soaring AWOL and desertion rates, drug addiction, and even fragging. Many of the Soldiers told to fight in Vietnam were reluctant to serve. General William C. Westmoreland, CSA at the time, acknowledged this fact and tasked Lieutenant Colonel Jack R. Butler, an action officer with the Personnel Studies and Research Directorate, to research the idea of an AVF Army. Butler examined four broad issues: quantity, quality, cost, and social implications. The report provided information that was primarily unattractive to what Army leadership wanted to hear. The report postulated that both quantity and quality would decrease without a draft. Conversely, monetary costs would increase and socially "the citizens might tend to no longer feel responsible for the defense of this country."⁵⁰ However, Butler, forecasting the political landscape, recommended that Westmoreland support the idea of an AVF. To oppose it might further anti-draft sentiment, "further dichotomize the issue, and work against the Army's image."⁵¹ The study was significant because it indicated the Army's willingness to consider an AVF, while identifying most of the key issues, problems, and potential solutions that if necessary, could be further pursued.⁵² In essence, the study laid the foundation for transition to the AVF in advance of events.

After Nixon became the thirty-seventh President of the United States in 1969, he set up the Gates Commission to study the realities of moving to an AVF. The man in charge of the

⁵⁰ Ibid, 18.

⁵¹ Ibid, 17-19.

⁵² Ibid, 19.

commission was Thomas Gates, former Secretary of Defense under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and a staunch opponent of the AVF. President Nixon told him, "If you can change your mind and end the draft I'll know it's a good idea."⁵³

The Gates Commission, using quantitative analysis, determined the AVF was a feasible choice, anticipating a total force of two to three million people across all branches of service. The commission assumed 440,000 soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen under the current draft model consisting of both volunteers and conscripts would be equal to 325,000 volunteers under the AVF model. The basis for this assumption was lower turnover and removing the inequity in pay for first term service members. Under the current draft model, the commission assumed that half of the volunteers were "true volunteers;" the other half felt threatened by the draft and would rather have preference of their military occupational specialty (MOS), so they enlisted. In the end, the commission knew they would need 150,000 volunteer recruits across DoD to get the AVF off the ground and assumed it could be achieved within one year by improving benefits, pay, and living conditions.⁵⁴

The largest source of disagreement in the commission was the cost associated with improving benefits, pay, and living conditions. Members of the commission were concerned as to whether the increase in cost would be sustainable over a considerable amount of time. To settle this concern, those in favor of the AVF provided both quantitative analysis and a philosophical case proposing why the AVF would actually be cheaper. First, the commission assumed that the less personnel in training status and lower turnover, created by professionalizing the force, would save money. Second, the conscripts serving were paying a "tax-in-kind" which subsidizes those who did not serve. Furthermore, philosophically, the AVF would be a system for maintaining

⁵³ Beth L Bailey, *America's Army* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 24.

⁵⁴ Thomas S. Gates, *The Report Of The President's Commission On All-Volunteer Armed Force* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1970), 28.

standing forces that minimized government interference, and was in accordance with individual freedoms and values.⁵⁵ The commission concluded that the draft imposed heavy burdens on a small minority of men while easing the tax burden on the rest and recommended a change to an AVF model.⁵⁶

On February 20, 1970, the Gates Commission, reported, "We unanimously believe that the nation's interest will be better served by an AVF, supported by an effective standby draft, than by a mixed force of volunteers and conscripts."⁵⁷ The commission's report was sent to the White House on February 21, 1970, and reviewed by a committee chaired by Martin Anderson, a special consultant to the President for systems analysis. Simultaneously DoD, under Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, reviewed the report and argued pay alone would not achieve the all-volunteer objective. Instead, he requested funds to expand recruiting programs, an increase to housing allowance, expansion of education and training opportunities while eliminating service irritants such as washing dishes in the dining facilities and cutting grass around Army posts.⁵⁸

President Nixon reviewed the different alternatives and asked Congress for a twenty percent pay increase for military personnel with less than two years' service and an additional two billion dollars in fiscal year 1972 for volunteer force initiatives.⁵⁹ On August 4, 1971, the House of Representative approved Public Law 92-129 by a vote of 297 to 108 moving to an AVF. On September 21, 1971, the Senate followed suit, by a vote of fifty-five to thirty and on September 28, 1971, President Nixon signed the bill that extended the draft for two more years

⁵⁵ Ibid, 6.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 28.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Robert K. Griffith, *The US Army's Transition To The All-Volunteer Force, 1968-1974* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1996), 41.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 17-19.

and then committed the country to transition to the All-Volunteer Force.⁶⁰ The energy within Kuhn's model required to break the robust reliant paradigm in 1971 was immense.⁶¹ This same energy does not exist today, as the vast majority of American people are unaffected by the conflicts in the Middle East thru tax or conscription.

Bernard Rostker, RAND Fellow, former Selective Service Director, and Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, claims that there are at least five reasons that the United States moved to an all-volunteer force in 1973:

First, the norm throughout American history has been a volunteer military with the exception of war. Second, the size of the eligible population of young men reaching draft age each year in the 1960s was so large and the needs of the military so small in comparison that, in practice, the draft was no longer required. By the late 1960s, the American system of conscription had lost legitimacy and support among the vast majority of the American people. Policymakers assumed with a large population of military age that obtaining enough volunteers was possible at budget levels that were acceptable. Third, the Vietnam War was unpopular. As the war went on, draft calls increased and deferments were cancelled; more Americans became subject to an institution they had been able, up to that point, to largely ignore. Fourth, as one historian has written, there was a "rational, intellectual basis for the volunteer force" that told young men that they did not have a moral obligation to serve. Most importantly, the Army itself had lost confidence in the draft as discipline problems among draftees mounted in Vietnam.⁶²

—Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!*

Essentially, the Army was ready for the paradigm shift because it lacked the combat effectiveness it required to be successful at the time.

Forty-two years later, as US Army leadership looks into the future, many of the factors identified by the Gates Commission and the Army during the Vietnam era are still relevant. First, war will test the elasticity of the AVF. Second, the American system of conscription has lost the

⁶⁰ Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006), 4.

⁶¹ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1996), 13.

⁶² Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006), 2.

support of the American people. In principle, the draft is not coming back short of a World War III crisis requiring a paradigm shift. Therefore, the Army will go to war with the AVF and will need to have systems in place to capitalize on nationalism and entice quality recruits in the numbers required to “fight and win in a complex world.”⁶³

Identifying Quality Recruits

Consistent with the reduction of the US Army, USAREC recruited approximately 67,000 new soldiers in FY 2014, approximately 8,000 less than in FY 2013. The quality goals assigned by the Department of the Army, as of FY 2012, were that at least ninety percent will possess a high school diploma, no less than sixty percent will be from TSC I-III A, and no more than four percent will be from TSC IV.⁶⁴ This section explains how manpower is recruited to meet USAREC’s assigned goals at the strategic level. This section will also demonstrate how recent population trends within the United States affect the availability pool and ultimately forecast a number that USAREC believes they are recruiting from in FY 2015.

Recruiting Command

USAREC is the Army's center of gravity for recruiting quality soldiers into to the force. Every soldier who joins the Army will enter through a USAREC recruiter. The Army’s manning guidance filters down and is refined from the President, to the SECDEF, CSA, and TRADOC Commander to Army’s G-1 (Personnel). The Army G-1 then determines the accessions required by each military occupational specialty (MOS) from which the USAREC Commander derives his objective and provides his subordinate recruiting commands with mission orders. Today, in 2015,

⁶³ Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1.

⁶⁴ “Frequently Asked Questions about Recruiting,” [usarec.army.mil](http://www.usarec.army.mil/support/faqs.htm), last modified 2015, accessed December 15, 2015, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/support/faqs.htm>.

the mission statement reads "USAREC will recruit professional, volunteer Soldiers; Soldier 2020, capable of effectively executing operations in the Army's complex operating environment."⁶⁵ Soldier 2020 is a current initiative to study the physical and cultural requirements required by each MOS in an effort to expand opportunities and assignments for women while upholding current standards.⁶⁶ USAREC is responsible for manning both the Regular Army and the US Army Reserve. They recruit US citizens, nationals, and non-citizens, both resident and non-resident, throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Guam, American Samoa, and at US facilities in Germany and Asia. USAREC also recruits legal non-citizens through the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program. The program allows legal non-citizens with in-demand skills to join the Army in exchange for expedited US citizenship.⁶⁷

As the nation's leadership reduces the size of the Army, the current objective is "Bringing quality young men and women into the Army - people who will complete their tours of duty and make a contribution to the Nation's defense."⁶⁸ US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced in February of 2014 that the US Army would reduce from 522,000 soldiers to approximately 440-450,000 soldiers, citing the federal government's budgetary concerns and lighter footprints in the Middle East.⁶⁹ The reduction is allowing recruiters to be more selective than in years past

⁶⁵ "United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) - About Us," [usarec.army.mil](http://www.usarec.army.mil/aboutus.html), last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/aboutus.html>.

⁶⁶ Amy Haviland, "5 Things To Know About Soldier 2020," *Army.Mil*, last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.army.mil/article/114753/>.

⁶⁷ "MAVNI," [goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com/benefits/additional-incentives/mavni.html), last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.goarmy.com/benefits/additional-incentives/mavni.html>.

⁶⁸ "United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) - About Us," [usarec.army.mil](http://www.usarec.army.mil/aboutus.html), last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/aboutus.html>.

⁶⁹ "Defense.Gov Secretary Of Defense Speech: FY15 Budget Preview," [Archive.defense.gov](http://archive.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1831), last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://archive.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1831>.

translating to higher quality enlistees. Confirming this trend, the US Army reported that ninety-five percent of enlistees were Tier I candidates in 2014.⁷⁰ However, USAREC's job is to look into the future and determine how to staff the force five to ten years from now based on strategic guidance from political and military leaders. Today, based on the AOC and a strategy of strategic land power laid out by senior Army leadership, the USAREC Commander has embraced the concept of talent acquisition. "In the smaller, more highly talented future Army, we will need soldiers stronger across the physical, mental, emotional, and cultural domains."⁷¹

Talent Acquisition based on Current Trends

Current trends indicate that the United States recruiting pool is slowly declining and is a concern for Army leadership. According to a presentation given by MG Allen W. Batschelet, the USAREC Commanding General, the US struggles to produce enough young men and women who meet Army qualifications. The specific concerns he highlights are physical disqualifications, propensity to serve, the societal rift between the Army and society, and future quality requirements.⁷²

⁷⁰ "Fiscal Year 2014 United States Army Annual Financial Report," asafm.army.mil, *Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller)*, last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.asafm.army.mil/fo/fod/cfo/cfo.asp>. Tier I candidates possess a high school diploma, or at least 15 college credits. A GED is not considered a high school diploma.

⁷¹ MG Allen Batschelet, "Recruiting 2020, US Army Recruiting Command," 2014. Presentation given at Fort Knox, Kentucky in April of 2014 to Industry Partners.

⁷² Ibid.

As indicated in Figure 1, most young Americans are ineligible to join the military, either because they are drug users, obese, medically unfit, fail to graduate high school, or possess a

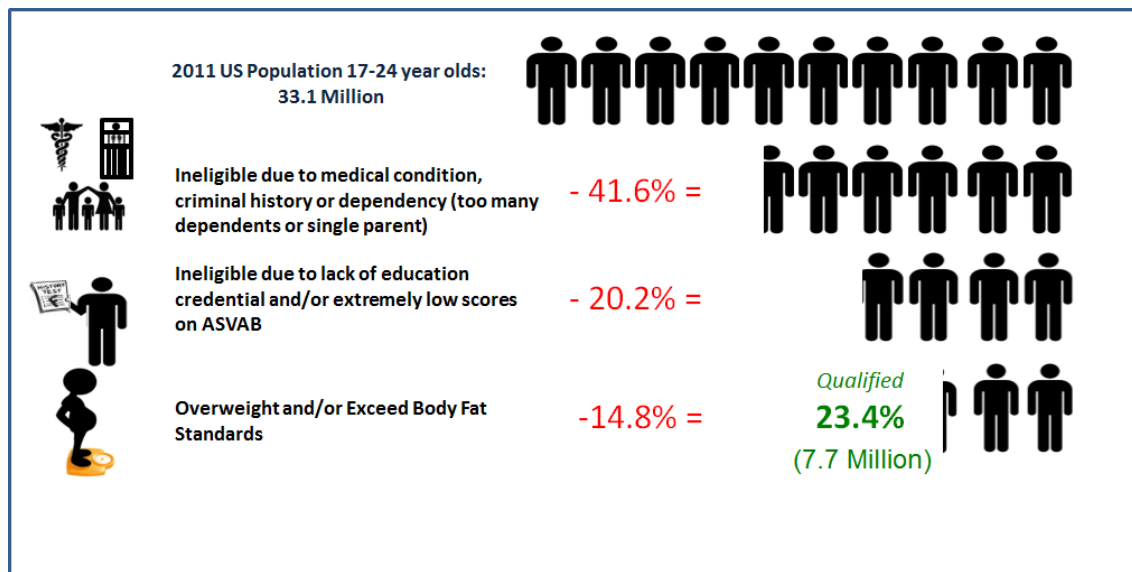


Figure 2. 2011 US Population 17-24 year olds qualified to serve

Source: MG Allen Batschelet, "Recruiting 2020, US Army Recruiting Command," 2014.

criminal record. Most of these trends have always been a hurdle to the Army's recruiting efforts. However, the newest, negative, fast progressing trend is obesity. In 2010, Readiness, an organization of retired senior military leaders, warned Congress that at least nine million seventeen to twenty-four year-olds in the United States were too fat to serve in the military. That is twenty-seven percent of all young adults, much higher than the USAREC estimates (see Figure 2). Over the past decade, the number of states with forty percent of young adults considered overweight or obese by the CDC has risen from one state to thirty-nine.⁷³ As retired US Army General Johnnie E. Wilson said, "Child obesity has become so serious in this country that military leaders are viewing this epidemic as a potential threat to our national security. We need

⁷³ William Christeson, Amy Dawson Taggart and Soren Messner-Zidell, *Too Fat To Fight* (Washington, DC: Mission, 2010), 2.

America's service members to be in excellent physical condition because they have such an important job to do. Rigorous service standards are critical if we are to maintain the fighting readiness of our military."⁷⁴ MG Batschelet, in 2014, reported that, "obese and overweight youth are the fastest growing disqualified group. By 2020 forecasts indicate that nearly fifty-four percent of young people will be disqualified from service solely because of their body composition."⁷⁵ This trend points out that less than one in five will be qualified to serve by 2020, based on physical disqualifications alone.

The next competing negative trend is propensity to serve. Propensity, as defined by the Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies who conducts annual youth polls for the DoD, is the percentage of youth stating they will "definitely" or "probably" enter military service in the next few years. Historically, propensity for military service dropped following Operation Desert Storm and continued declining through 2001.⁷⁶ Beginning in late 2001, propensity among males increased sharply as a reaction to the 9/11 attacks and sense of nationalism. Propensity remained high until June 2006 when significant declines in propensity occurred. The trend is now stable, albeit much lower than late 2001. Many variables influence propensity to serve, including college education being the new norm, youth unemployment, veteran family members, sex, age, and race. Generally, propensity in the US is higher for men than women, decreases with age, and is highest among Hispanics.⁷⁷ Hispanics in the US Army grew by ten percent between 1985 and 2013 while also serving in percentages above their percentage of the general population.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid, 1.

⁷⁵ MG Allen Batschelet, "Recruiting 2020, US Army Recruiting Command," 2014.

⁷⁶ Department of Defense, "Youth Poll Wave 20" (Arlington: Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies, 2010), 3-23.

⁷⁷ Department of Defense, "Youth Poll Wave 20" (Arlington: Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies, 2010), 3-23.

⁷⁸ "Hispanics In The United States Army," army.mil, last modified 2016, accessed January 10, 2016, <http://www.army.mil/Hispanics/>.

According to a 2010 propensity survey, educational aspirations of youth have gradually increased over the years and the vast majority of youth ages sixteen to twenty-one (ninety percent) report that they plan to obtain higher education of one form or another following high school.⁷⁹ In the past, the US Army has been able to capitalize on this trend offering exclusive college financial assistance packages. Yet, today, recruiters are reporting that young people and parents are finding other ways to afford college, to include federal loans and grants that, inadvertently, have weakened the power of the GI Bill.⁸⁰ Consequently, there has been an increase in the number of high school graduates enrolling in colleges and universities. However, according to data from the National Center of Education Statistics, only 29.4 percent (as of 2010) who enter two-year institutions and 39.4 percent (as of 2007) who enter four-year institutions successfully graduate.⁸¹ These statistics point towards the idea that two markets exist for potential recruits, high school graduates, and college dropouts.

The economy and employment options for youth also influence propensity to enlist. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the youth unemployment rate was 12.2 percent in July 2015; 2.1 percentage points less than a year before. Among the major demographic groups, July unemployment rates were lower than the prior year for young men at 12.7 percent and women 11.7 percent.⁸² A strong economy is usually never a bad thing for the country, however, when considering the Budget Control Act, funding for today's military will remain unchanged or trend slightly lower not allowing for increased incentives or advertising to combat a dwindling youth unemployment rate.

⁷⁹ Department of Defense, "Youth Poll Wave 20" (Arlington: Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies, 2010), iv.

⁸⁰ MG Allen Batschelet, "Recruiting 2020, US Army Recruiting Command," 2014.

⁸¹ US Department of Education, "Fall 2001 and Spring 2007 through Spring 2014, Graduation Rates," *National Center for Education Statistics*, last modified 2007, accessed December 15, 2015, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_326.10.asp.

⁸² US Department of Labor, "Labor force statistics from the current population survey," *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, last modified 2015, accessed October 6, 2015, from <http://www.bls.gov/data/home.htm>.

Additionally, the US veteran population has decreased in size. A study conducted by Commanders Andrea Boyer and Edward Schmitz of the Navy Recruiting Command show that propensity to enlist is most strongly associated with the presence of veterans in their families.⁸³ In essence, through statistical analysis they proved the military is a family business. However, this positive factor is eroding. For instance, in 1995, 36.8 percent of youth ages sixteen to twenty-one had a family member who had served in the US Armed Forces.⁸⁴ As of December 2010, this estimated proportion had dropped to only sixteen percent. Veterans, who may positively influence a youth to enlist, are a shrinking population and are projected to decrease by approximately forty percent over the next thirty years. (See Figure 3)

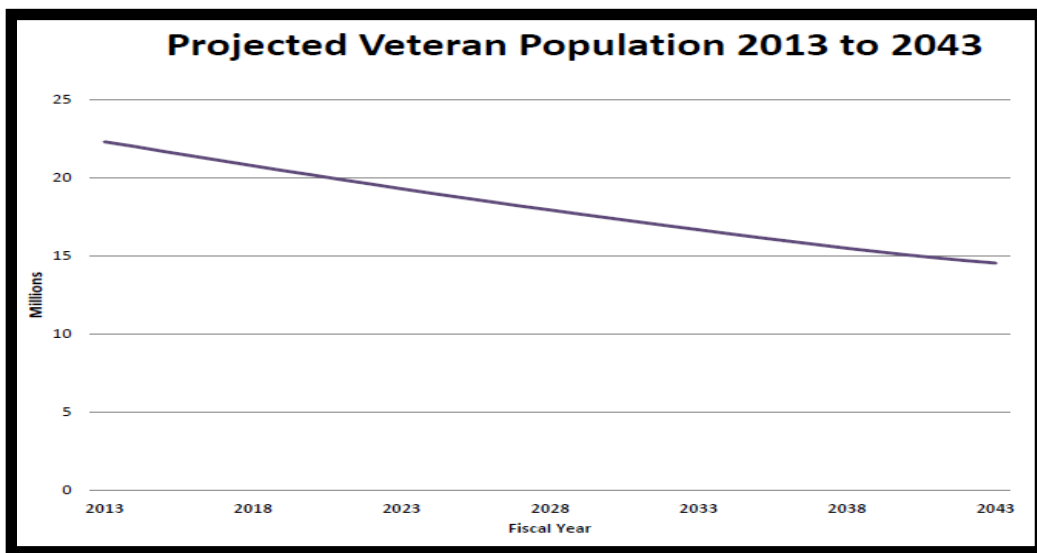


Figure 3. Projected Veteran Population 2013 to 2043

Source: National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, Office of the Actuary, Veteran Population Projections Model (VetPop2014), Table 1L

⁸³ Andrea Boyer and Edward Schmitz, *Socio-Demographics and Military Recruiting: The Role Of Veterans* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 1999).

⁸⁴ Department of Defense, "Youth Attitude Tracking Study: 1995" (Arlington: Defense Manpower Data Center, 2000).

Another factor, previously identified by USAREC, is the societal rift between the Army and society. On one side of this rift is the Army, with a clear vision of its future that requires very highly qualified volunteers. On the other is a youth population whose qualification and desire for service are quickly eroding. To complicate matters, six in ten young US citizens have never spoken to a recruiter. Ten years ago, that number was only four in ten.⁸⁵ In the middle of this conundrum, there is an inherent irony in a nation and society which publically praises its soldiers, yet is increasingly unconnected and unwilling to either serve or recommend others do so.⁸⁶ Symptomatic of this widening gulf is the US Congress. In 1971, seventy-three percent of congressional representatives were veterans; now less than eighteen percent are.⁸⁷

One of the Army's strengths has always been to emphasize the benefits of being a veteran. While USAREC continues to emphasize the benefits of service, employment struggles facing many veterans transitioning from the military undermine recruiting. At its peak, in 2008, over seventy-five percent believed military service would prepare them for a future career due to the inherent veteran benefits and a robust G.I. Bill. Today that percentage has dropped to sixty-three percent, despite five years of tough economic circumstances and the conclusion of two long wars.⁸⁸ If the AVF is going to sustain itself for the long-term, the societal rift is another negative trend that needs to be accounted for when examining potential solutions.

Over the past 42 years, since the commencement of the AVF, the Army and Congress were able to make quick policy changes by: 1) lowering the quality of enlistees, 2) raising

⁸⁵ MG Allen Batschelet, Rick Ayer, and Col. Mike Runey, "Radical Changes Required In Recruiting", *Army Magazine*, 2014, accessed October 8, 2015, 50 http://www.ausa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2014/Documents/april14/BatscheletAyerRuney_April2014.pdf.

⁸⁶ MG Allen Batschelet, "Recruiting 2020, US Army Recruiting Command," 2014.

⁸⁷ Rachel Wellford, "By The Numbers: Veterans In Congress," *PBS Newshour*, last modified 2015, accessed December 14, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/by-the-numbers-veterans-in-congress/>.

⁸⁸ MG Allen Batschelet, "Recruiting 2020, US Army Recruiting Command," 2014.

incentives, 3) increasing advertising and the recruiter force or 4) a combination of all three. In 2014, MG Batschelet stated, "the first is not an option based on the Army's strategic direction and the other two are too costly."⁸⁹ With both shrinking talent pools and recruitment resources, the Army must find ways to do more with less while closing gulf between the military and the society it protects.

Today, there are over thirty-three million seventeen to twenty-four year olds in the US. However, after accounting for all those disqualified, the eligible population is equal to approximately one million or three percent of the population. According to a recent article in the *Economist*, "Who will fight the next war?" that number of eligible recruits, when also accounting for propensity to serve, is approximately 390,000.⁹⁰ In FY 2015, the Regular Army needed to recruit 57,000 soldiers out of that 390,000 or 14.6 percent of the eligible population while also competing with the other services. Yet, USAREC met their recruiting objectives only by cannibalizing the recruits slotted for FY 2016 indicating this eligible and willing population is shrinking even further. The question is, can the Army influence sociological trends, or merely adapt to what society provides?

The Costs of Lowering Quality

Army leaders recognize they can no longer lower standards to grow the size of the force because it is a very costly endeavor, both fiscally and morally. The fiscal costs show up on the balance sheet under the categories of first-term attrition, TRICARE, and G.I. Bill costs. Unfortunately, the latter two lack the data from which to derive an actual fiscal cost. On the other hand, the moral cost displays itself in the lack of unit cohesiveness encompassing discipline,

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ "Who Will Fight The Next War?" *The Economist*, 2015, accessed December 15, 2015, <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21676778-failures-iraq-and-afghanistan-have-widened-gulf-between-most-americans-and-armed>.

leadership, training, and organization. The moral costs can be measured by looking at non-deployable personnel costs. Additionally, high performing leaders leave the force because they did not sign up to be social workers. This section calculates the fiscal price the Army paid for lowering entrance standards from FY 2005 thru FY 2008 while acknowledging the price is potentially much higher because of moral costs.

First-Term Attrition

The Army has consistently been concerned with recruits' failure to serve their first term. This kind of attrition is "disruptive, degrades unit performance, and wastes valuable training and recruiting resources."⁹¹ Unfortunately, the DoD does not track low quality from high quality recruits once they enter the service. To discover whether the cost of first term attrition escalated when standards were lowered, this study looks at two different years. The two years for consideration based on available evidence are, 1993 when the Army met quality goals, and 2006 when they did not. Recruits that enter the Army have an eight-year service obligation. However, the average enlistment contract for time served on active duty is approximately four years, although contracts can range from two to six years, and the remaining time is served in the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR), unless the soldier joins the National Guard or the Army Reserve. In essence, recruits enlisting between 2005 and 2008 effect data from 2006 until 2012.

The US Army Recruiting Command met the Army's goal for the fiscal year in 1993 by accessing 77,563 active component soldiers (100.9 percent of the recruiting objective). The ASVAB test ranked 70.1 percent of the recruits as high-quality accessions scoring above the TSC IIIA threshold while only 2.2 percent of the TSC IV population entered service. In addition, 94.5

⁹¹ Mark C. Young and Leonard A. White, *Preliminary Operational Findings From The Army's Tier Two Attrition Screen (TTAS) Measure* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2006), 1.

percent graduated high school, meeting both of the Army's established quality objectives.⁹² According to the GAO, of the new recruits across DoD, 31.7 percent failed to fully serve their first term. Of that 31.7 percent, 20.7 percent were separated after basic and advanced individual training, between the seventh and forty-eighth months of their contract. The cost incurred by DoD to train each recruit through basic and advanced individual training was approximately \$35,532. Using the estimated first-term attrition numbers for 1993, DoD lost \$1.3 billion on 72,670 new recruits who left the service early, depriving the service a return on its investment.⁹³ Applying the DoD-wide percentages to the 77,563 active-duty Army personnel recruited in 1993 the Army spent \$874 million (\$1.4 billion in 2015) on recruits who failed to complete their initial obligation.⁹⁴ The Army exceeded their established quality objectives, yet still spent 3.6 percent of their \$23.4 billion personnel budget on first term attrition.

From 2005 to 2008, the Army, needed to recruit over 80,000 personnel each year to fulfill the manning requirements from a recruiting pool of approximately one million while competing with the other services.⁹⁵ The Army's recruiting task also became more challenging at this time as available youth saw the force taking the brunt (eighty-three percent) of casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan.⁹⁶ To ensure mission requirements were met without implementing a draft, the entrance standards were lowered. The percent of high school graduates dropped by 16 percent while the DA lowered the TSC IIIA and above goal by seven percent. In addition, the Army

⁹² Stephen E. Everett and L. Martin Kaplan, *Fiscal Year 1993*, Department of the Army Historical Summary, Center of Military History (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 23.

⁹³ United States General Accounting Office, *Military Attrition: DOD Needs To Follow Through On Actions Initiated To Reduce Early Separations* (Washington, DC: General Accounting Office, 1999), 2.

⁹⁴ US Army Recruiting Command, *Army Recruiting 1974-2009*, accessed October 25, 2015, www.usarec.army.mil/hq/apa/download/Missions1974-2009.doc.

⁹⁵ "Frequently Asked Questions About Recruiting," [usarec.army.mil](http://www.usarec.army.mil), last modified 2015, accessed December 15, 2015, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/support/faqs.htm>.

⁹⁶ Hannah Fischer, *United States Military Casualty Statistics* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2007), CRS-5.

raised the age limit for enlistment from thirty-five to forty-two while increasing the number of allowable felony and physical waivers as well.⁹⁷ Bonuses also doubled for just about every MOS during this time.

Did lowered standards produce higher costs in terms of first term attrition? In FY 2005, 56.2 percent of recruits possessed both a high school diploma and an AFQT score above fifty.⁹⁸ The next year, the Active Army handed out an estimated 11,229 adverse discharges, dropped 3,751 soldiers from the rolls, and discharged 15,357 others for reasons not categorized. These recruits were most likely recruited in 2005 based on both the statistics and ranks analyzed.⁹⁹ In FY 2012, the average cost of training a new recruit from the time the individual walks into a recruiting station until he reaches his first duty station is \$73,000. This average cost is based on the expenditures USAREC, United States Military Entrance Processing Command (USMEPCOM), and United States Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) have to spend in order to recruit, in process, and train an individual before arriving at their first assignment.¹⁰⁰ The training cost does not reflect the Operation and Maintenance Army (OMA) funding for civilian pay, advertising, recruiter support, automated data processing, recruitment facilities, and communications averaging \$22,898 per recruit in FY 2010. After multiplying these numbers, the Army spent \$2.9 billion on recruits who did not complete their first term. The personnel budget at

⁹⁷ "Group Finds Significant Gap In The Army's 2008 Quantity And Quality Goals," salem-news.com, last modified 2009, accessed October 24, 2015, http://www.salemnews.com/articles/january212009/army_goals_1-21-09.php.

⁹⁸ Fred Kaplan, "The US Army Lowers Recruitment Standards ... Again," *Slate Magazine*, last modified 2008, accessed December 15, 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/war_stories/2008/01/dumb_and_dumber.html.

⁹⁹ Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, *Defense Manpower Requirements Report*, Fiscal Year 2007 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2006), accessed December 15, 2015, http://prhome.defense.gov/Portals/52/Documents/RFM/TFPRQ/Docs/dmrr_fy07.pdf.

¹⁰⁰ US Army Recruiting Command, "*Frequently asked questions about recruiting*," accessed October 24, 2015, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/apa/faqs.htm>.

the time was \$41.4 billion representing a loss of seven percent in total dollars due to first term attrition.

Table 1: Active Duty Army First Term Attrition Costs

Active Duty First Term Attrition Costs		
Year	1993	2006
Recruits who did not meet initial obligation	24,587	30,337
Recruitment and Training Costs	35,532	95,898
Cost of First Term Attrition	\$ 874 million	\$ 2.9 billion
Personnel Budget	\$ 23.4 billion	\$ 41.4 billion
Percentage of Personnel Budget	3.60%	7%

Source: Created by the author from a combination of data: US Army Recruiting Command, Defense Manpower Requirements Report, and 1998 GAO Report on Military Attrition.

Looking at this equation from a civilian leader's perspective, many in Congress may think that paying an extra 3.4 percent over six years to avoid a draft is not a bad deal. However, tactical level leaders (Brigade Commanders and below) understand the extra fiscal and moral costs associated with lower quality soldiers. Costs that are not experienced by the upper echelons of both political and military leadership.

Once these soldiers arrive at their unit, the responsibility is on the commander to uphold the good order and discipline within a unit. An administrative separation is often required for those soldiers unable to adapt to the military lifestyle. The processing goal for an administrative separation is fifty working days.¹⁰¹ In the case that the unit is able to meet the processing goal, the Army loses more money. The soldier receives two months' pay while out-processing. On top of that, an E-5, who should be training subordinates, is required to sit in waiting rooms across an Army installation with the soldier being separated for approximately a week. Considering this,

¹⁰¹ AR 635-200, *Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), 2.

based on E-2 and E-5 base pay the Army a minimum of \$79.6 million in FY 2006. This number does not include basic allowance for housing (BAH), subsistence (BAS), health care costs, or education benefits not being used or lost that most receive during this time. This evidence indicates that the fiscal cost is much higher than the 7.0 percent of the personnel budget, but due to the DoD not tracking the quality of personnel once they enter the service, the cost cannot be quantified.

Furthermore, the fifty day processing goal is usually not a feasible goal to meet based on legal regulations. Counseling, rehabilitative transfer requirements, and health evaluations apply to almost all administrative separations. The 2015 Commander's Legal Handbook states, "Commanders must make reasonable efforts to identify Soldiers who may be candidates for separation as early as possible, in order to improve their chances for retention."¹⁰² Counseling is always required for involuntary separation due to parenthood, physical or mental conditions, entry-level performance and conduct, unsatisfactory performance, patterns of misconduct, and failure to meet body composition standards. Additionally, a rehabilitative transfer is generally required for entry-level performance and conduct, unsatisfactory performance, and patterns of misconduct. Per Legal, trainees in basic training are to be recycled between companies or platoons at least once. When soldiers reach their active units, they must be rotated between battalion-sized units or larger at least once, with at least three months at each unit.¹⁰³ Unit commanders are also required to ensure trainees and soldiers receive physical and mental health evaluations in accordance with AR 40-501 and 10 USC 1145.¹⁰⁴ Counseling, rehabilitative

¹⁰² Misc Pub 27-8, "2015 Commander's Legal Handbook" The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School (Charlottesville: Government Printing Office, 2015), 39.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Department of Defense, *DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1332.14: Enlisted Administrative Separations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), 2.

transfers, and health evaluations are the reasons why 50 days is a "goal" for separating a soldier from service. This goal is seldom achieved, resulting in higher costs.

Non-Deployable Personnel

High rates of non-deployable personnel are another problem the Army faced during the lower quality force era (FY 2005-FY 2012). However, the argument that non-deployable rates correlate with low quality is tough to make based on the evidence available. Soldiers become non-deployable for reasons including administrative, legal, and medical conditions. These soldiers place stress on the overall force because they count against their unit's manning roster. The unit, in turn, deploys understrength or receives fresh personnel unfamiliar with the unit's standard operating procedures (SOPs) shortly before leaving. In 1981, when pressing Congress to implement enlistment quality standards, Major General Maxwell Thurman stated, "If we fail to bring in ... competent soldiers now, the malaise may not be apparent for another decade, but the symptoms will be present from the moment standards are lowered."¹⁰⁵ The secondary and tertiary effects of lowering entrance standards Thurman alluded to is quite evident today given the sheer cost to maintain and retain quality soldiers and conversely remove those unable to uphold standards or deploy.

In the lower entrance standard era, the average number of soldiers per BCT unable to deploy steadily increased. For example, over a span of three years the Army's rate of those unable to deploy went from 9.9 percent in 2007 to 14.5 percent in 2010; an increase of over 4 percent (See Figure 4 for breakdown). By 2010, approximately 26,100 soldiers (4.6 percent of the force) could not perform an essential part of their duties, but were still receiving a paycheck. However,

¹⁰⁵ Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2006), 392.

the evidence at present time does not indicate what percentage of non-deployable soldiers were of substandard quality. This data could indicate that multiple deployments on the same soldiers

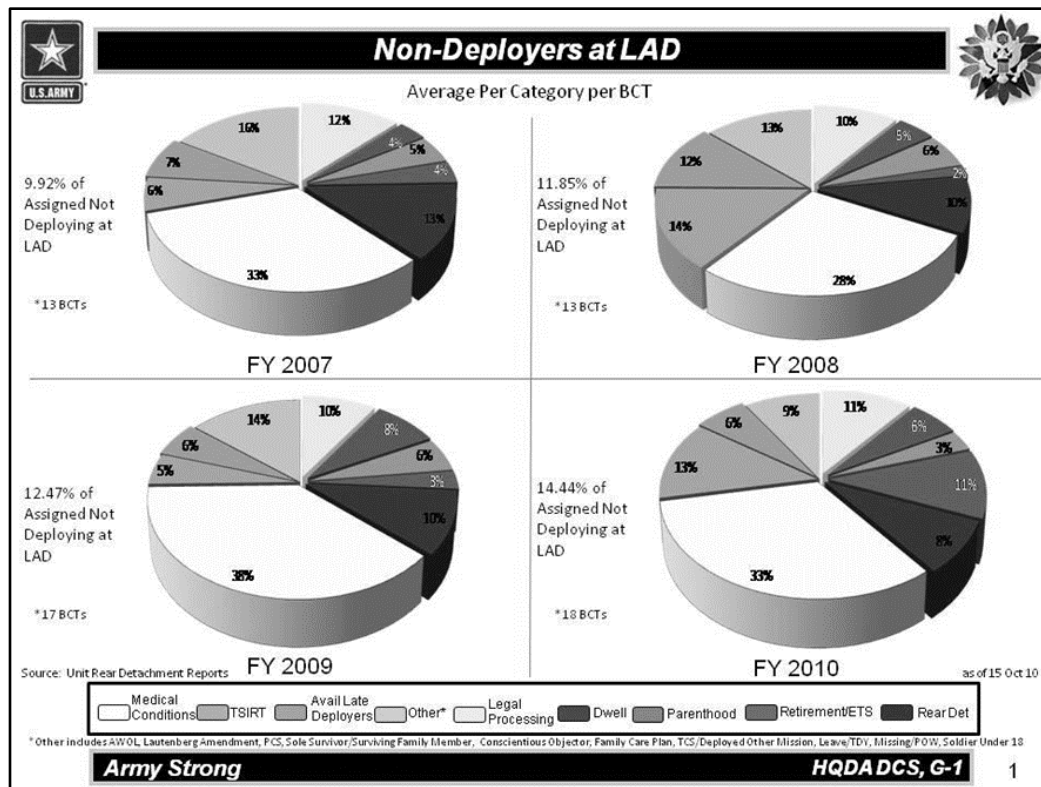


Figure 4. Yearly comparison of Non-Deployers at LAD (Latest Arrival Date).

Source: Deputy Chief of Staff G-1, United States Army, " Non-Deployable Campaign Plan" briefing slides, Army G-1, Pentagon Washington DC, Oct 10, 2010.

should have triggered a draft as the Gates Commission intended; or that active soldiers were coasting along and the protracted war exposed them.

Additionally, there is an anecdotal argument among tactical level leaders, serving during this time, that when a soldier is facing administrative separation he or she will often claim a medical issue to receive further financial benefits. AR 635-200 requires a soldier facing administrative separation and not meeting medical retention standards as determined by a medical authority during a mandatory physical and mental health exam during the separation process to

also be evaluated by a Medical Evaluation Board (MEB).¹⁰⁶ The average time to complete a MEB under the Physical Disability Evaluation System (PDES) in 2010 was 130 days, and the total processing time from referral to separation was over 277 days.¹⁰⁷ To deal with this problem the Army created Warrior Transition Units (WTU) so deploying units could transfer these individuals allowing deployable soldiers to come to the unit from advanced individual training and other units. Since 2007, the Army established twenty-nine WTUs and nine community-based WTUs serving over 58,000 soldiers of which only forty percent had deployment related injuries.¹⁰⁸ Again, this argument is lacking the evidence required because the quality of the non-deployable population is unknown. This subject area requires more research as recent history becomes more transparent. However, with the rate of discharge about double (3.6 percent in 1993, 7.0 percent in 2006), than nearly a decade earlier, there is no doubt that some of the soldiers brought in during the low quality era contributed to this costly problem.

Total Cost

Organizing, training, and equipping newly accessed soldiers is a substantial and enduring investment. Separation of soldiers prior to completion of their obligated service periods results in a significant loss of investment and generates a requirement for increased accessions.¹⁰⁹ In 1993, the Army achieved qualitative goals, and 3.6 percent of the personnel budget was lost due to first term attrition. However, in 2006, when entrance standards were lowered to prevent breaking the

¹⁰⁶ AR 635-200, “*Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations*,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), 14.

¹⁰⁷ Scott W Arnold et al., *Non-Deployable Soldiers* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2011), 28.

¹⁰⁸ Warrior Transition Command, “WTU Fact Sheet,” accessed October 24, 2015, http://www.wtc.army.mil/factsheets/WTU_Fact_Sheet_7_January_2014.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ Department of Defense, *DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1332.14: Enlisted Administrative Separations* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014), 2.

AVF, qualitative goals were substantially missed, and first term attrition engrossed 7.0 percent of the personnel budget. In essence, from FY 06 to FY 12 the Army lost an additional 3.4 percent more of its personnel budget than it normally does. The loss of 3.4 percent is representative of lower entrance standards. Yet, further research indicates that first term attrition is not the only cost that comes with lowering standards and in reality the cost is much more than just 3.4 percent of the personnel budget.

Lowering the standards cost the Army approximately \$13.7 billion over six years, for an average of \$2.3 billion per year in first term attrition alone. In addition, a moral component or “tax-in-kind” is present that cannot be calculated in real dollars. Instead, it shows up in total costs via a unit’s status report (USR) and the Army losing talented leadership. As BG Philips argued in 1974, “quality begets quality” and that “people are willing to join and to stay in a quality organization and will refuse to stay (reenlist) in a rag tag organization.”¹¹⁰

Although current evidence only accounts for a \$13.7 billion loss due to lowering the entrance standards, there are strong presumptions that the total approximate cost is closer to \$20 billion. This \$6.7 billion deficit is presumed because of the cost in morale and unit cohesion lost due to the influence the lower quality soldiers have on others within their unit or organization. Further complementing this claim, the Army’s military personnel expenditures grew by 46 percent, from 41.4 billion in FY 06 to 60.6 billion in FY12, much faster than in the AVF’s years past.¹¹¹ However, only with more time will the true costs be calculated. For now, the real question is, is the current solution (lowered standards) to expand the Army quickly acceptable or does a

¹¹⁰ Robert K. Griffith, *The US Army's Transition To The All-Volunteer Force, 1968-1974* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1996), 286.

¹¹¹ Army Financial Management, “Army Budget Overview,” Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management & Comptroller) accessed October 25, 2015, <http://www.asafm.army.mil/>. All information regarding Army Personnel Budget from FY 06-12 was retrieved via search from this website.

more proactive engagement with the recruiting environment appear more viable in the pursuit of growing or even maintaining a quality AVF.

MG (Ret) Laich and COL Raymond, authors introducing new alternatives to the AVF, argue that the country needs to shift the paradigm to a new supply-based model that relies on universal service or a draft lottery system that keeps a high number of Reservists on duty. These alternatives would provide the solution for the next time the Army is in another limited war that goes on longer than expected requiring a larger Army over a short-term period. Both are valid arguments, but require the type of crisis witnessed in the early 1970s. Iraq, Afghanistan, and most recently Syria, proved that non-existential, limited wars do not amount to a crisis. At great cost, the paradigm continued. However, this is sub-optimal. The US Army simply cannot afford to wait for a crisis (existential threat) or an anomaly (war on terror). So, can the Army, in the absence of a crisis, albeit with significant fiscal and congressionally mandated organizational constraints, use tools at their disposal to prevent these substantial costs from happening again?

The Costs of Increasing the Quality Pool

Almost everything has a price tag in the defense industry, but some things make more fiscal sense than others. This section explains how to increase the pool of quality candidates while living within the Army's means. Starting from a level of 480,000 soldiers in 2001, Congress raised the Army's end-strength goal to 565,000 over the course of 11 years before cuts started in 2013 (See Figure 5).¹¹² In essence, the Active Army grew by 85,000, enabled by lowering the standards for four of the 11 years to meet recruitment goals. By comparison, the US Army grew the force by a size representative of the entire British Army, surely an endeavor. This section will examine the expansion of Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) programs as a

¹¹² Defense ManPower Data Center, Office of the Secretary of Defense, "DoD Personnel, Workforce Reports & Publications," last modified 2015, accessed December 15, 2015, https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/dwp_reports.jsp.

potential solution to the problems facing the Army when trying to sustain quality through both expansion and contraction in the current recruiting environment that exists today.

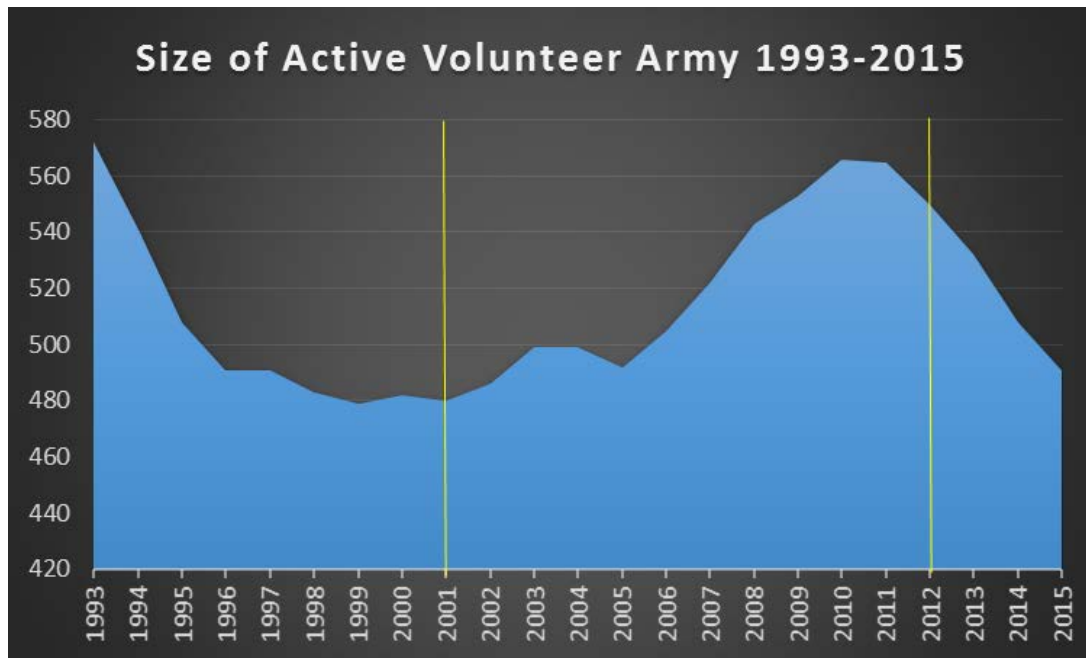


Figure 5. Size of the Active Volunteer Army 1993-2015

Source: Defense Manpower Data Center¹¹³

Army Junior Reserved Officer Training Corps (JROTC)

Congress established JROTC in 1916, under the National Defense Act, with the broad mandate to develop good citizenship and responsibility in young people.¹¹⁴ The debate since inception concerns the value and proper direction of the program. The basic issue is whether youth education is a proper mission of the US armed forces. Skeptics posit that JROTC encourages militaristic attitudes among young people or claim it represents a waste of scarce

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ William J. Taylor Jr., “Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps: Contributions to America’s Communities” (Washington, DC: The CSIS Press, 1999), xi.

defense dollars.¹¹⁵ However, evidence made available through the work of the Center for Strategic and International Studies along with information papers on Army JROTC provide substantial reasons as to why expanding these programs should be considered a cost effective vehicle for sustaining the quality of the AVF.¹¹⁶

Army JROTC's mission is simple, "To motivate young people to be better citizens."¹¹⁷ JROTC accomplishes the mission by providing educational opportunities and lifelong skills to America's youth in high school. The goals of the program are to: promote citizenship, develop leadership and critical/ creative thinking, communicate effectively, improve physical fitness, provide incentive to live drug-free, provide global awareness and history of military service, and train to work as a member of a team.¹¹⁸ The program's measures of effectiveness give credence to the program's ability to make a difference. In school year 2008-2009, cadet performance, when compared to other students, demonstrated positive trends. Cadets in the program usually have ten percent less disciplinary issues and maintain a nine percent better graduation rate when compared to students who did not participate. There were also minor improvements in attendance, grade point averages, and standardized test scores among the cadets.¹¹⁹

In the Army JROTC program, retired service members, using their previous experiences, reach across the country's cultures, ethnicities, religions, and ideologies to introduce young impressionable teenagers to military cultures and traditions. Peter L. Berger, the author of *The Social Construction of Reality*, refers to the teenager's experience as secondary socialization. His

¹¹⁵ Ibid, vii.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ US Army Cadet Command, Cadet Command Regulation 145-2, *Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps: Organization, Administration, Operations, Training and Support Program* (Fort Knox: US Army Cadet Command, Feb 2012), 1.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Army Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, *JROTC White Paper* (www.usarmyjrotc.com, 2010), accessed October 8, 2015, <http://www.usarmyjrotc.com>.

theory of secondary socialization is defined as, “any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society.”¹²⁰ The JROTC cadets are afforded the opportunity to actually participate in this process to figure out whether the military is an endeavor they would like to pursue prior to commitment. The teenagers who do not receive the opportunity because their high school does not offer the program do not participate in this important socialization process. Instead, they meet the military under alternate circumstances. The alternate circumstances consist of an awkward conversation with a recruiter in a high school cafeteria, a commercial during a football game, a "cold" call, or entering a recruiting station without knowing what to expect. Often during the alternate process, the military loses the narrative due to lack of exposure. In the end, JROTC cadets get to see what "real" Army people are all about, often recruited by their peers to be a member of a "see-if-you-like-it" Army unit and the majority of the time end up being better students for it.

Since Army JROTC is not a recruitment program and cadets who participate incur no military obligation, how can this program assist the recruitment of quality personnel? According to a report published by all the services on the total disposition of JROTC graduates, in school year 1996-1997, out of 30,630 graduating cadets, forty-five percent planned to attend college, twenty-eight percent enlisted on active duty, four percent enlisted in the reserve or National Guard. Additionally, eight percent went on to pursue a commission through ROTC or a Military Academy.¹²¹ The same sentiment was echoed more recently by then CSA, General Eric Shinseki in a February 2000 testimony before the House Armed Services Committee discussing the Army's JROTC program as a line item in the budget request. General Shinseki testified, "Our indications are about 30 percent of those youngsters—we don't recruit them, as you know. We are

¹²⁰ Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction Of Reality* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), 130.

¹²¹ William J. Taylor Jr., “Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps: Contributions to America’s Communities” (Washington, DC: The CSIS Press, 1999), 6.

not permitted to do that. But by virtue of the things that they like about that experience, about 30 percent of them end up joining the Army, either enlisting or going on to ROTC and then joining the officer population."¹²² The only persuasion factor involved is that cadets who successfully complete three or four years of the program and choose to enlist may enter the military at the discretion of their instructors as a Private First Class (PFC or E-3).¹²³ Although the data are almost 20 years old, they still provide a snapshot of the potential difference a heavy investment in this program could make in the pool of quality recruits.

In 2015, Army JROTC consisted of 1,731 units out of the approximate 3,000 that existed among all services. The Army's JROTC program represents all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, along with DoD schools in Guam, American Samoa, Japan, Korea, and Germany. Approximately 4,000 retired officers and enlisted soldiers taught the curriculum in FY 2009 at a cost of \$149.3 million.¹²⁴ With approximately 286,000 cadets enrolled, the Army spent \$522 dollars per cadet.

In 2001, the Department of Education reported that there were 26,407 public high schools and 10,693 private high schools; while 2.9 percent of the high-school population is home-schooled. According to this report, 4.7 percent of the high-schools nation-wide have an Army JROTC program. The last time JROTC programs were expanded was in 1993 by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Colin Powell. Powell's goal was to use the political will and American trust gained from Desert Storm to help high school youths, primarily those from the troubled inner cities. He envisioned inner city kids from broken homes, finding stability, a taste of

¹²² General Eric Shinseki, "National Defense Authorization Budget Request", House Armed Services Committee interview by, in person (House of Representatives, Washington, DC, 2000).

¹²³ US Army Cadet Command, Cadet Command Regulation 145-2, *Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps: Organization, Administration, Operations, Training and Support Program* (Fort Knox: US Army Cadet Command, Feb 2012), 2.

¹²⁴ Department of Defense, *Department Of Defense Budget Fiscal Year 2009* (Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), 2008), 21.

discipline, work ethic, and pride of the being a part of something healthier than a gang.¹²⁵ The FY 1993 National Defense Authorization Act authorized an increase in the maximum allowable number of JROTC units from 1,600 to 3,500, more than doubling the number of programs. Since then, the Army's JROTC program grew by approximately 939 units from 792 to 1,731. The question is whether this expansion helped sustain the quality of the AVF Army.

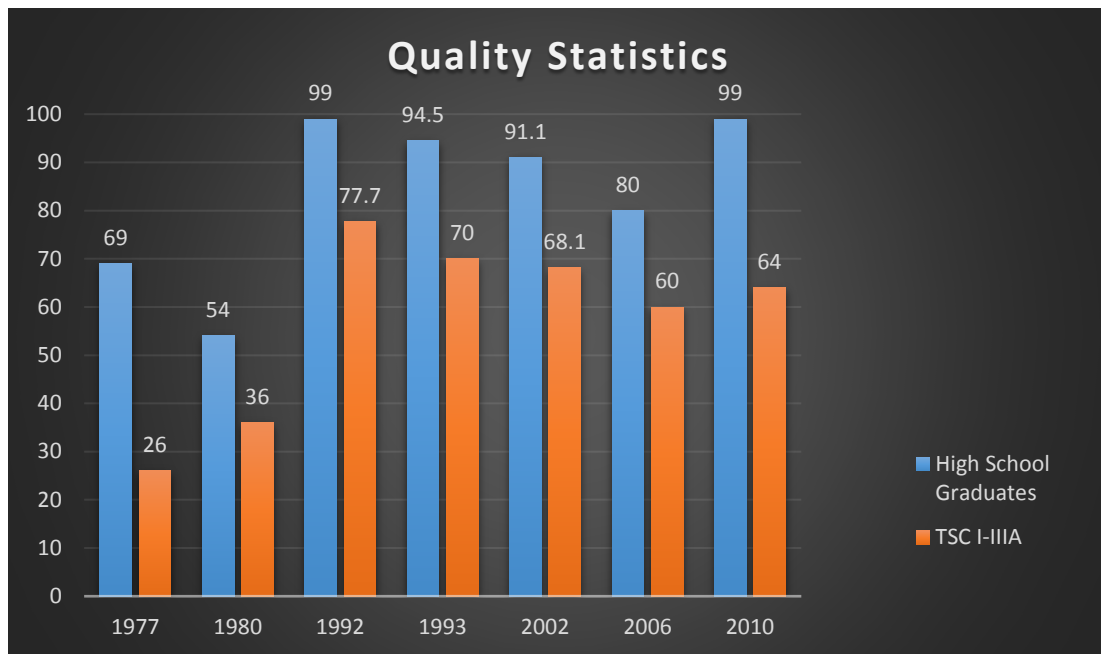


Figure 6. Quality Statistics

Source: Author using a combination of GAO publications, Army Financial Reports, and USAREC Briefs.

The Department of the Army's goals throughout the nineties up until 2005 required USAREC to recruit at least ninety percent high school graduates and sixty-seven percent from TSC IIIA or above. According to Figure 5, the JROTC expansion ensured the Army did not miss its quality goals from 1993 to 2002. High school graduates enlisting decreased by 3.4 percent and

¹²⁵ William J. Taylor Jr., "Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps: Contributions to America's Communities" (Washington, DC: The CSIS Press, 1999), 16.

TSC I-III A recruits decreased by 1.9 percent, so JROTC's impact does not look substantial.

However, Figure 5 fails to account for the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 and a severe cut to advertising appropriations from 1993 to 2002.

The National and Community Trust Act of 1993 created the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) as an independent agency of the United States government. The CNCS is the nation's largest annual grant maker engaging more than five million Americans in service through AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, Senior Corps, and other national service initiatives. The agency's mission is to "support the American culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility." Today, the agency increases educational opportunity through educational awards that have provided more than \$2.4 billion to more than 800,000 Americans to defray college costs.¹²⁶ In 1993, this act limited the Army's ability to compete with other government agencies for a finite resource, high-quality personnel. The act provided an educational benefit nearly equal to that offered by the Army, making the Army a less attractive option. In 1993, MG Batschelet, then a student at the Command and General Staff College, argued that the majority of high-quality young people prefer National service to Army service as a means of obtaining money for college. When given the option of national service and Army service, thirty-four percent of high-quality youths, who previously said they would serve in the military, chose to participate in a national service initiative to assist with college costs.¹²⁷ The expansion of JROTC, also approved by Congress, could have been merely an example of Robert Jervis's idea of "doing things in twos."

Jervis's idea asserts that JROTC expanded because policymakers feared that the National and Community Service Act of 1993 would produce an undesired relationship or an unbalanced

¹²⁶ "About," National Service Official Blog, last modified 2016, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://nationalservice.tumblr.com/about>.

¹²⁷ Allen W. Batschelet, *National Service and Its Effect On The Army's Ability To Acquire Quality Soldiers* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 1994), 96.

impression between the military and civilian professions. Considering the average recruiting objective from 1994 to 2002 was 72,000 recruits along with the thirty-four percent loss in interest due to the Service Act, the Army potentially lost 24,500 high quality recruits per year.¹²⁸ Additionally, the Army's advertising budget fell from a height of seventy-nine million dollars in 1989 to twenty-three million dollars in 1993, unemployment began to drop under the Clinton Administration, and there was a prevalent assumption among the population that a peace dividend existed due to the Gulf War.¹²⁹ The fact that the Army was able to meet their quality objectives over the decade that followed indicates that the JROTC program expansion was a key component to making up for both the decrease in advertising and the thirty-four percent loss of high-quality recruits caused by the National and Community Service Act of 1993.

Previous evidence indicates that twenty-eight percent of JROTC cadets enlist in the Army.¹³⁰ Transposing this against the rapid increase during Iraq and Afghanistan when 85,000 soldiers were required means that, using the same enlistment ratio, 589,175 cadets in the JROTC program could have filled the requirement. To achieve this total, the Army would have to double the amount of JROTC programs to 3,462, or 9.3 percent of high schools. The cost associated with this move is approximately \$324 million.

This figure must be considered against the 13.7 billion spent in first term attrition, a direct result of lowering entrance standards, between FY 2006 - FY 2012. The Army could have paid \$324 million for 42 years before it reached that same 13.7 billion dollar mark. However, the Army JROTC website states, "the Army has reached its funding limit for JROTC programs....,

¹²⁸ US Army Recruiting Command, "*Army Recruiting 1974-2009*," accessed October 25, 2015, www.usarec.army.mil/hq/apa/download/Missions1974-2009.doc.

¹²⁹ Allen W. Batschelet, *National Service and Its Effect On The Army's Ability To Acquire Quality Soldiers* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 1994), 28-29.

¹³⁰ William J. Taylor Jr., "Junior Reserved Officers Training Corps: Contributions to America's Communities" (Washington, DC: The CSIS Press, 1999), 6.

further expansion will occur when funding becomes available."¹³¹ As of 1998, there were 181 high schools waiting for an Army JROTC unit, with demand growing at a rate of approximately thirty-one percent per year in the late 1990s.¹³² The demand is there, at minimal cost, to make both a vast monetary savings and greatly increase the pool of interested and quality potential enlistees.

Overall, JROTC possesses the potential to solve a number of problems facing the Army's talent acquisition effort in a declining recruiting pool. Expanding the program would make large impacts on the propensity to serve and willingness to talk to a recruiter because cadets are able to test the waters in a non-committal environment first. Cadets in JROTC, may not have family members who are veterans, however, their instructors would be. Instructors, if properly vetted, will be able to show first-hand what the Army has provided for them and their career paths. The program will not fix the obesity trend, but would definitely be a step in the right direction as cadets must take physical education to be a member of the program. If the Army wants to reverse the decreasing propensity to serve statistics and increase the awareness of service life, expanding Army JROTC is a good decision. Finally, expanding Army JROTC puts transitioning veterans to work in a capacity that allows them to continue serving and positively influencing America's future.

If such a linear solution exists, seemingly apparent to even the CSA in his testimony in 2001, why has JROTC not grown? The answer to this question is that the Army has multiple techniques and procedures when it comes to recruiting. Some of the procedures the Army manages and some they do not. The techniques consist of JROTC, advertising, the recruitment force, bonuses, and educational benefits. Advertising, the recruitment force, bonuses, and

¹³¹ "Establish JROTC Program - US Army JROTC," [usarmyjrotc.com](http://www.usarmyjrotc.com/jrotc-program/establish-jrotc-program), last modified 2015, accessed October 19, 2015, <http://www.usarmyjrotc.com/jrotc-program/establish-jrotc-program>.

¹³² William J. Taylor Jr., "Junior Reserved Officers Training Corps: Contributions to America's Communities" (Washington, DC: The CSIS Press, 1999), 46.

education benefits can be turned on and off as needed, similar to a light switch. However, a significant JROTC commitment, once made, cannot be easily turned off without the Army losing goodwill among the American people affected. Additionally, debate exists as to whether the program belongs in our nation's high-schools.

Activist groups such as the American Friends Service Committee, the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, Veterans for Peace, War Resisters League, and the Project on Youth and Non-Military Opportunities, actively oppose the JROTC for a number of reasons. The reasons include emergent costs incurred by the local high schools, lack of control, and a low-quality curriculum. The American Friends Service Committee released a report in 1999 arguing that school districts end up paying substantially more than the military provided. The same organization argues that the curriculum narrows the viewpoint of the students, encourages blind following rather than critical thinking, and indoctrinates students in militaristic authoritarian loyalty and passivity.¹³³

Table 2. The Active Army's Cost Benefit Table FY 2004-05

Active Army's Cost Benefit Table FY 2004-05					
Based on FY 2005 - 80,000 Recruit Goal	Cost Increase (Millions of Dollars)	Percent Increase	Recruit Increase	Recruits Yielded	Cost Per Recruit (per Recruiting Tool)
Advertising (10% fund increase yeilds 1%)	38.8	22%	2.20%	1,760	22,045
Recruiters (10% fund increase yeilds 4%)	31.7	14%	5.60%	4,480	7,076
AJROTC FY07 (Between 27 and 30% enlist)	128 (Yearly)	30%	30%	24,000	5,333

Source: Created by the author from a combination of data: Recruiting, Retention, And Future Levels of Military Personnel, FY 2007 DOD Budget, and General Shinseki's Testimony.

Yet, performing a simple cost-benefit analysis (See Table 2), one can conclude that JROTC is the best recruiting approach the Army possesses. Although not a light switch that cannot be simply turned-off, or easily implemented among the naysayers. Increasing Army

¹³³ Ibid, 21-23.

JROTC is strategically a good decision if the United States is to sustain the AVF for the long-term without sacrificing quality standards. In perspective, the cost of lowering quality from FY2005-2008 (13.7 billion dollars) could have paid for an Army JROTC program representative of ten percent of the nation's high school for forty-two years; the current age of the AVF.

Conclusion

The purpose of this monograph was to discover whether any solutions exist within the institutional control of the Army to sustain the quality of the AVF through periods of contraction and expansion. After examination, the evidence suggests that an expansion of Army JROTC is a worthwhile investment. Yet, it cannot be the ultimate answer. The expansion must be coupled with education benefits that outpace competing institutions, pay equivalent to civilian minimum wages, focused advertising, and stable recruiting efforts. These efforts can offset the challenges facing the Army when it comes to recruiting high quality soldiers under all circumstances. Robert Jervis posits that "you can never do just one thing. Effective action is often made possible by employing multiple policies that constrain and work with the dynamics of the system."¹³⁴ For example, critics of social reform are correct to note that welfare can decrease incentives to work, but this does not mean that nothing can be done. It means is that no single policy will be effective. Thus, welfare programs are often coupled with education, job training programs, and work incentives.¹³⁵

In the case of sustaining the quality of the AVF, the solution requires consideration of historical trends along with the emerging trends existing today. The goal is to avoid the "total" cost that comes with lowering the entrance standards previously identified. By 2025, recruiting challenges will grow as propensity and unemployment continue to decline while physical

¹³⁴ Robert Jervis, *System Effects* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 10.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 64.

disqualifications and recruiting competition with the private sector and universities continue to increase. Until then, it is incumbent upon the Army leadership to continue to establish and modify existing programs to regain the narrative within America's communities and meet qualitative recruiting objectives.

First and foremost, the Army must expand their JROTC program to represent 10 percent of all secondary schools. In 2001, 10 USC 102 removed the statutory limitation placed on the number of programs making this aggressive expansion legal.¹³⁶ While expanding the program, the Army leadership needs to implement the mission command philosophy. A mission command philosophy would understand what works in Nashville may not work in NYC and therefore allow the hired instructors to build mutual trust and tailor the program to meet the needs of the high school and local area. Some secondary schools may require no uniforms or weapons training, while others may be more enticed by a more militaristic program. Additionally, the JROTC expansion would allow recruiters to shift focus to the post-secondary school market where they are more likely to be successful in recruiting high quality individuals.

Second, USAREC must shift their target age group to the post-secondary school market. More JROTC programs in high schools will require less time of recruiters working among that population. In this case, the JROTC program will produce the eighteen to nineteen year old high school graduates the Army requires. This allows USAREC to shift the target recruitment age from an eighteen year old about to graduate high school to a twenty to twenty-two year old. The average age of a recruit from FY 2009 to 2012 was 21.4 years old.¹³⁷ Approximately, 90 percent of high school graduates enter post-secondary schools while only roughly thirty-five percent of

¹³⁶ "10 US Code Chapter 102 - Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps," Legal Information Institute, last modified 2013, accessed December 15, 2015, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/subtitle-A/part-III/chapter-102>.

¹³⁷ "Frequently Asked Questions About Recruiting," last modified 2015, accessed December 15, 2015, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/support/faqs.htm>.

them graduate. At this point in a potential recruits' life, the Army could capitalize on their current initiative that focuses on soldiers earning college credit for their training via the Army University. As a recruiting commander in Hope Mills, North Carolina recently said, "It was the Army then college... now it's the Army and college."¹³⁸ This also allows recruiters to focus on a specific demographic and implement their referral network. The referral network is established when recruits, who sign a contract, lets the recruiter know about a friend of similar quality interested in serving. The referral network is crucial because it converts to quality enlistments more than any other program currently available, due to "the trust and respect the individual has for the person making the referral automatically transferring to the recruiter."¹³⁹

Finally, the Army JROTC expansion needs to be coupled with exclusive educational benefits, focused advertising, and a stable recruiter population in order to constrain and work the dynamics of the system as Jervis said. The educational benefits must be strikingly better than those offered by sister services, National service, or federal grants. As of 2015, many of the educational benefits are no better than any other combination of federal scholarships and grants currently offered. Based on evidence, the Army is the least sought after branch of service, but this revolution could change that dynamic within the recruiting environment.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, advertising could shift focus towards kids joining their local Army JROTC programs to learn more about the Army on channels where airtime is much less expensive. This would replace an expensive generic campaign looking for young adults to enlist during major sporting events. Furthermore, the number of recruiters within the system requires stability versus constant

¹³⁸ Drew Brooks, "US Army Recruiting Command: Soldiers are investing communities," last modified 2016, accessed February 4, 2016, <http://www.fayobserver.com/military/>.

¹³⁹ US Army Recruiting Command, USAREC Manual 3-0, *Recruiting Operations* (Fort Knox: US Army Recruiting Command, 2009), 2-7.

¹⁴⁰ MG Allen Batschelet, "Recruiting 2020, US Army Recruiting Command," 2014.

adjustment to supply and demand. The relationships and social networks they create go away and are much tougher to regain when their footprint is reduced due to budget cuts.

If these three points are properly implemented, the Army would be able to expand by 100,000 soldiers on a reasonable timeline while maintaining quality standards without implementing a draft. Moreover, USAREC would become more adaptive to emerging trends similar to a starfish organization, as introduced by Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom. A starfish organization relies on the power of peer relationships. This strategy lays out a way to create more information catalysts among different demographics of the population, allowing for a more efficient recruitment effort.¹⁴¹ Recruiting doctrine states, "public opinion and the influence of various social and political groups can influence the market and the willingness of young people to serve in the Armed Forces. Most objections to Army service stem from misperceptions and lack of knowledge."¹⁴² These misperceptions and lack of knowledge are not corrected by generic commercials, brochures, or walking into a recruiting station. Positive peer relationships and secondary socialization correct misperceptions and lack of knowledge.

If this strategy is implemented, the envisioned end state is: 1) a youth population, 14 -18 years of age, with increasing propensity to serve, 2) a reduction in the civil-military divide, and an 3) opportunity for recruiters to focus their efforts on the post-secondary market where they are more likely to meet high quality recruits who are ready to enlist. This end state translates to a more highly qualified Army and technically competent force capable of operating in the most complex of domains; the land domain. "The land domain is the most complex because it addresses humanity- its cultures, ethnicities, religions, and politics."¹⁴³ Furthermore, when

¹⁴¹ Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish And The Spider* (New York: Portfolio, 2006), 1.

¹⁴² US Army Recruiting Command, USAREC Manual 3-0, *Recruiting Operations* (Fort Knox: US Army Recruiting Command, 2009), 1-6.

¹⁴³ Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1-0, *The Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-1.

everything is cost driven, the risk associated with a minimal budgetary increase of .58 percent (324 million – cost of JROTC with expansion/ 56.1 billion – FY2013 Army Personnel Budget) of total Army personnel spending, is vastly outweighed by the possibility of creating a quality pool of recruits with ensuing societal benefits. The answer to the Army's problems has been there all along, yet further research is required.

Areas for further research include an analysis of locations, introducing the idea to the public, and the vetting process for future instructors. The analysis of locations would determine where Army JROTC programs are most needed effectively creating the starfish organization on the map of the US. The public introduction would determine how to sell this expansion to the American people without blatantly announcing it is a recruitment mechanism. Today, there are probably a few potential ways. One window of opportunity exists if the US decides to eliminate the Selective Service System from policy. Today, the country is entering new territory by opening all combat MOSs to women. This political move will potentially expect women to register for a draft, which will most likely not happen once the American people are heard thus eliminating the Selective Service System. Ergo, the public introduction could hinge on this opportunity. Finally, if the instructor is not fully committed, his or her program will fail and damage the reputation of the Army. Instructors must be thoroughly vetted and be the best our military has to offer because our future force is dependent on it. If these areas are further researched and provide precise solutions this initial blueprint could be executed and provide the AVF with a strategic, rather than a tactical, cost effective way forward.

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